Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction

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English only

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Item 6 of the provisional agenda
Issues of substance and process for the period before the next Review Conference, with a view to reaching consensus on an intersessional process

Intersessional Programme

Submitted by the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on behalf of the Group of the Non-Aligned Movement and Other States

I. Introduction

1. NAM reiterates its position expressed on the Working Paper Number BWC/CONF.VIII/WP.26, with regard Intersessional Programme 2017-2020 as follows:

2. The purpose of the intersessional programme is to discuss, and promote common understanding and effective action on those issues identified for inclusion in the intersessional programme by the Eighth Review Conference.

3. Recognizing the need to balance an ambition to improve the intersessional programme within the constraints -both financial and human resources- facing States Parties and the importance of respecting the mandate given by the review Conference to the inter-sessional process and the position of not reopening the fractious debates on this matter.

4. The future new intersessional period should be guided by the following principles and objectives:

(a) The aim of the intersessional programme is to strengthen the effectiveness and improve the implementation of all provisions of the Convention on a voluntary basis.

(b) The BWC forms a composite whole and that, while it is possible to address related issues separately, it is necessary for all the interlinked elements of the Convention to be dealt with in a balanced and comprehensive manner, whether they relate to regulation, compliance or promotion.

(c) Any follow-up or ad hoc mechanism for the Ninth Review Conference should be comprehensive enough to allow an evaluation of the Convention in its entirety. It should take advantage of all the experiences accumulated so far by the States Parties in the framework of the Convention.

(d) Annual meetings should achieve a balance between political and technical follow up of the Convection, including balance between the timing and content of work been assign to the different meetings. Any expert meetings should not be in the detriment of the States Parties Meetings.

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(e) To ensure that Review Conferences remains as the forum with the authority to make decisions within the framework of the Convention.

(f) To facilitate the fullest exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for the peaceful uses of bacteriological agents and toxins

(g) Although the multilateral negotiations aimed at concluding a non-discriminatory, legally binding agreement is the only sustainable method of strengthening the Convention; the Conference recognizes however the value of the intersessional programme for promoting the objectives of the Convention in all its articles.

(h) To take into account the economic obstacles that the developing countries face, giving continuity to the results of the Review Conferences.

5. The traditional rotation of the Chair of the Annual Meetings among the Regional Groups, to be supported by two annual vice-chairs, one from each of the other two regional groups, should be maintained.

6. All meetings will reach any conclusions or results by consensus.

7. The Ninth Review Conference will consider the work and outcome of these meetings and decide on any further action.

II. Proposals to be inserted in the Final Report of the 2017 MSP

8. The Final Report of the 2017 MSP should include a section entitled "Conclusions". The following proposals should be inserted in this section as follows:

9. In accordance with the decision taken by the Eighth Review Conference as reflected in paragraph 6 of the Final Document BWC/CONF.VIII/4, in order to "seek to make progress on issues of substance and process for the period before the next Review Conference, with a view to reaching consensus on an intersessional process.". States Parties identified the following topics to discuss and promote common understanding and effective action within the intersessional programme (2018-2020) in preparation for the Ninth Review Conference:

(a) Legally binding instrument to strengthen the Convention, including trough verification measures.

- Specific measures design to ensure effective and full implementation of article X which also avoid any restriction incompatible with the obligations undertaking under the Convention, noting that the provisions of the Convention should not be used to imposed restrictions and/or limitations, and on the transfer for purposes consistent with the objectives and the provisions of the Convention of scientific knowledge, technology, equipment, and materials.
- Take into account all previous proposals presented by States Parties and all other relevant material, including the mandate and the work of the Ad Hoc Group established by the 1994 BWC Special Conference.

(b) Institutional Mechanism for International Co-operation in the context of Article X.

- Review of the reports by States Parties on their implementation of Article X, and reports by the ISU on the operation of the database system to facilitate assistance requests and offers;
- Identification of challenges and obstacles to developing international cooperation, assistance and exchange in the biological sciences and technology, including equipment and material, for peaceful purposes to their full potential, and possible means of overcoming these;
- Specific measures for the full and comprehensive implementation of all provisions of Article X, including facilitation of cooperation and assistance in terms of

equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for peaceful purposes, and identification of critical gaps and needs in these areas.

- Format and procedure under the Convention to settle disputes arising from concerns related to the implementation of Article X, including transfer denials that a State Party might consider inconsistent with Article X provisions.
- Measures to strengthen the operation of the database system established by the 7th Review Conference, to ensure that specific, timely and concrete offers of cooperation and assistance under Article X are provided by States Parties in the database and measures to improve reporting on this issue, taking into account the States Parties concerns over the mismatch of the proposed offers and requests, in particular for developing countries States Parties to the Convention.
- Ways and means to target and mobilize resources, including financial resources, to address gaps and needs for assistance and cooperation, in particular from developed to developing States Parties, and from international and regional organizations and other relevant stakeholders.
- Actions on education, training, exchange programmes and other means of developing human resources in the biological sciences and technology relevant to the implementation of the Convention, particularly in developing countries.
- Actions to promote capacity-building, through international cooperation, in biosafety and biosecurity and in the areas of preparedness, response, crisis management and mitigation of outbreaks of infectious diseases and analogous events.
- Actions to strengthen an efficient coordination of cooperation with other relevant international and regional organizations, and other relevant stakeholders.

10. The following topics could also be include on the intersessional programme for 2018-2020:

(a) Review of developments in the field of science and technology related to the Convention.

(b) Strengthening national implementation.

(c) Preparedness, response and assistance.

11. States Parties reiterated that the aim of the intersessional programme is to strengthen the effectiveness and improve the implementation of all the provisions of the Convention on a voluntary basis.

12. States Parties recognized that the BWC forms a composite whole and that, while it is possible to address related issues separately, it is necessary for all the interlinked elements of the Convention to be dealt with in a balanced and comprehensive manner, whether they relate to regulation, compliance or promotion.

13. States Parties noted that the annual meetings should achieve a balance between political and technical follow up of the Convection, including balance between the timing and content of work been assign to the different meetings. States Parties Meetings should continue to be a higher priority.

14. States Parties reaffirmed that Review Conferences remains as the forum with the authority to make decisions within the framework of the Convention.

15. States Parties recognized that multilateral negotiations aimed at concluding a non-discriminatory, legally binding agreement is the only sustainable method of strengthening the Convention. In the absence of detailed treaty provisions for implementation, States Parties emphasized that the ISP should make progress on issues of substance and process in all its meetings for the strengthening the Convention.

16. States Parties, taking into account that the intersessional programme has been to discuss and promote common understanding and effective actions, and with the view to make progress on issues of substance and procedure for the period before the Ninth Review

Conference (2018-2020), emphasized that the Meetings of States Parties should include in their Agendas the consideration of appropriate measures for strengthening the effectiveness and improving the implementation of the Convention with the view to reinitiate discussions on verification measures to be included in a legally binding instrument. States Parties also emphasized that any meeting within the intersessional programme will examine the appropriate measures for strengthening the effectiveness and improving the implementation of the Convention with the view to reinitiate discussions on verification measures to be included in a legally binding instrument as well as NAM proposals related to Article X.